

REMARKS

Claim 22 is canceled without prejudice, and therefore claims 11, 12, 15 to 21, 23 and 24 are now pending in the present application.

In view of the following, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating that claim 22 contains allowable subject matter. Accordingly, the features of claim 22 have been included in claim 11, so that claim 11 is allowable, as are its dependent claims. Claim 22 has therefore been canceled without prejudice. Withdrawal of the objection to claim 22 is respectfully requested.

Claim 21 was corrected as to a minor grammatical matter, and approval and entry of claim 21 are therefore respectfully requested.

Claim 23 was objected to as to a minor grammatical matter (double commas), and it has been corrected as suggested. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claim 23 is respectfully requested.

Claims 11, 12, 15 to 21, 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over European Patent Application No. 11601119 ("Tabata") and U.S. Patent No. 6,457,784 ("Bohm").

While the rejections may not be agreed with (including for the reasons previously explained in the prior Office Action, and which are included herein by reference), to facilitate matters, the features of claim 22 have been included in claim 11, so that claim 11 is now allowable, as are its dependent claims (claim 22 has therefore been canceled without prejudice, since its features have been included in claim 11).

Accordingly, for at least these reasons, claim 11 is allowable, as are its dependent claims 12, 15 to 21, 23 and 24.

In view of all of the foregoing, withdrawal of the obviousness rejections is respectfully requested.

In sum, claims 11, 12, 15 to 21, 23 and 24 are allowable.

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Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all of presently pending claims 11, 12, 15 to 21, 23 and 24 are allowable. It is therefore respectfully requested that the objections and rejections be withdrawn. All issues raised by the Examiner have been addressed, so that an early and favorable action on the merits is respectfully requested.

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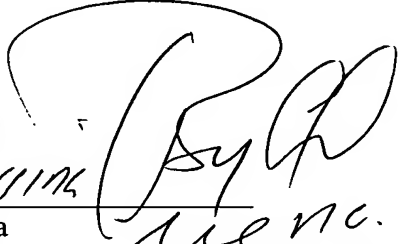
Respectfully submitted,

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